

CABLE, FRENCH ATLANTIC

Duxbury Clipper July 10, 1980⁵

French Atlantic Cable

The parade, one of the best in years, ran smoothly and the floats were spaced with bands and walking units in-between, giving more time to appreciate the works of many on the floats. Tinkertown, as usual, showed more imagination and hard work with its float depicting the French cable and the cable house. They handed out flyers telling of the laying of the cable and the excitement it caused. Here is what the flyers said:

Tinkertown is proud to present to the citizens of Duxbury a re-creation of an event that is an important part of our history:

The French Atlantic Cable traveled from Brest, France to Duxbury, 3,300 miles. The unbroken cable, 2 inches in diameter, was set down by a fleet of ships including the *Great Eastern*, *War*, *Corrie*, *Scandarea* and the *Chiltern*.

On Friday, July 23, 1869, it arrived in Duxbury aboard the *Chiltern*. Approximately 1,000 people were on the beach at Rouse Hummock when the cable was pulled ashore, carried across the marsh to the Old Cove, down Cove St. to the Old Bank Building (Cable house) 1 3/4 miles. One of the first messages came from Napoleon announcing its success.

Four days later, a tent was set up on Abrahm's Hill for 600 guests and dignitaries, who received the following invitation:

The citizens of Duxbury propose to celebrate the arrival of the French Atlantic Cable on the shores of Massachusetts, and to extend their welcome to the officers commanding the expedition, by a public festival, to be held on the 27th instant.

They respectfully solicit the honor of your company on the occasion.

S.M. Gifford, J.S. Loring, Isaac Keene, C.B. Thomas, Allen Prior, Alfred Drew, Walter Thompson, James Wilde, Jonathan Ford, Calvin Pratt, Committee of Arrangements. Duxbury, July 20, 1862.

Sir James Anderson took the occasion to toast the arrival of the cable. "The French Atlantic Cable, uniting 2 continents, may it be, for all time, a medium of good will, and the promoter of an international peace as serene and undisturbed as that of the still ocean deeps through which it holds its course."

S.N. Gifford of Duxbury made this toast: "The seeds of the Mayflower, though planted in New England's cold December, have germinated, taken root and flourished, until their fruits are known the world over."